

TO: Chairman and Members

DATE: May 9, 2013

**SUBJECT: Standards and Training for Corrections
Executive Steering Committee Recommendations**

AGENDA ITEM: I

**ACTION: X
INFORMATION:**

RESOURCE PERSON: Barbara Fenton

Summary: At the September 2012 meeting of the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), the Board approved the establishment of an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to review the Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) program, regulations, and policies to improve program effectiveness and efficiency. Member Baca was appointed as the chair and Member Arnold was appointed as the co-chair.

This agenda item updates the Board on the progress of the project and requests that the BSCC accept the ESC recommended changes to the STC policies.

Background: The STC program was created in 1980 to standardize the selection and training procedures of local corrections agencies throughout California. At that time, regulations and policies were adopted to make specific the provisions of Penal Code Sections 6035-6040 which provide authority for the STC program. Over the years, various updates have been made to the regulations and procedures in response to defined needs; however, there has not been a comprehensive review of the program regulations and procedures since they were initially adopted.

The BSCC Board established an ESC in September 2013, appointed Member Baca as the chair and subsequently appointed Member Arnold as the co-chair of the committee. At the November BSCC Board meeting, the Board approved the ESC membership and the project timeline.

Discussion: The ESC held its first meeting on February 28, 2013. The committee reviewed proposed improvement strategies that had been developed by STC staff, examined the results of a stakeholder survey on the STC program, and considered additional issues that were generated by field contact and presented by STC staff.

The ESC unanimously approved seven general improvement strategies for the STC program:

1. STC will offer an expanded menu of technical assistance and services to support local training outcomes.
2. STC will be a statewide resource for local agencies on best practices in the field of training and administering an effective training program.
3. STC will promote and support the delivery of quality training courses through an expanded and integrated system of training, certification and monitoring.
4. STC will expand its partnerships.
5. STC will achieve time and cost efficiencies through a Learning Management System (LMS).
6. STC will expand e-learning opportunities.
7. STC will maintain current and appropriate regulations, standards, policies and procedures through a regular review process.

For the remaining issues, the ESC either 1) made a recommendation, or 2) forwarded the issue to a workgroup for additional examination and recommendation development by program practitioners. To assist that effort, the ESC established two workgroups: a workgroup to discuss policy issues, and a workgroup to discuss regulation issues. The ESC made recommendations on four issues,

assigned four issues to the policy workgroup for recommendation development, and forwarded the remaining issues to the regulation workgroup.

It is the recommendation of the ESC that the BSCC Board accept their recommendations on the following four issues:

1. STC Learning Management/Course Management System

This issue was submitted by STC staff. Additionally, over 50 comments received via the STC field survey requesting an improved electronic management system.

STC has two database systems: the Annual Training Plan (ATP) system, which captures individual agency information, and the Request for Certification (RFC) system, which holds information on each course certified through STC. These two electronic STC systems are dated, not user-friendly, and not linked. Additionally, they do not provide many of the features that are found in learning management systems (LMS). A new system would integrate the ATP and RFC functions, centralize training records, streamline existing processes, and result in time and cost savings.

It is the ESC's recommendation to support the transition to a comprehensive electronic learning management system.

2. STC Compliance Monitoring Procedure

This issue was brought forth by a BSCC Board member who inquired about the feasibility of conducting compliance monitoring in a less costly manner since the majority of participating agencies were in compliance. Additionally, seventeen comments on the compliance monitoring process were received through the stakeholder survey. All comments supported the current practice of on-site annual visits.

STC conducts on-site annual compliance reviews of every participating agency to determine each agency's adherence to the STC Program requirements, identify training challenges, and develop appropriate technical assistance strategies. The compliance monitoring process currently includes a self report where agencies identify their compliance issues. Over 50% of these reports are inaccurate. The inaccuracies are discovered during the on-site monitoring visit. Agencies either under report or over report compliance issues because they are not familiar with the nuances that define compliance.

The ESC supported the continuance of the annual on-site compliance monitoring, stating that it helps agencies to improve their training programs and the management of those programs. The visit is viewed more as a "mentoring visit" and is a critical part of fostering strong partnerships and the technical assistance relationship. All agreed that because funding is attached to the STC Program, the compliance monitoring visit serves a critical purpose. The ESC also discussed and supported the use of the LMS system to streamline the compliance monitoring process through the centralized record function.

It is the recommendation of the ESC that the current compliance monitoring process and visit continue and that the learning management system be utilized to streamline the process.

3. Use of STC Funds – Non-Eligible Staff

This issue was submitted by STC staff, as well as through the survey.

Currently, STC funds can only be used to pay costs for “eligible staff” to attend training. The ESC examined the restriction of only using STC funds for staff in an “STC eligible position” and considered allowing more flexibility in directing the use of funds to include on-call or temporary help staff.

This change extends flexibility in the use of funds only and allows the decision to be made at the local level. It does not increase the allocation based on on-call or temporary help staff. (Each agency’s allocation is based on the number of STC-eligible positions in that agency.) The flexibility in the use of the funding allows decisions to be made at the local level. This change does not affect the funding allocation and requires that agencies must maintain compliance with the STC Program training requirements.

It is the recommendation of the ESC to change the policy to allow the use of STC funds for non-eligible staff to attend STC certified training.

4. Use of STC Funds – Special Certified POST Courses

This issue was submitted through the survey; three comments were received.

Currently, STC funds can only be used to pay costs for courses that have been certified through the RFC process. Three survey comments requested that agencies be allowed to use STC funds for POST courses that have been approved through the special certification process, not the RFC process.

The ESC did not support the use of STC funds for special certification POST-certified classes. This change was not viewed as necessary since POST classes can already be certified through the RFC process to allow the use of STC funds. In fact, many courses are “dual” certified.

It is the recommendation of the ESC that the current policy remain.

The policy workgroup chaired by Tehama County Chief Probation Officer Richard Muench, met on March 27, 2013 and developed recommendations on the four issues that were assigned by the ESC. Those recommendations were approved by the ESC on April 25, 2013:

It is the recommendation of the ESC that the BSCC Board accept their recommendations on the following four issues:

1. Testing Policy for Trainers of Core

This issue was submitted by STC staff.

STC’s core training standard includes testing requirements. Because core courses are a selection standard, it is important to ensure that tests are developed in accordance with legal and professional standards. A trainee’s failure may mean the loss of employment. Therefore, all tests must be constructed, administered, scored, and reported appropriately.

Best practices in test administration include a written policy to guide the development and administration of tests in accordance with federal uniform guidelines on employee selection practices. Currently, STC policy does not require agencies that provide core training to have a testing policy. As a result, many core providers do not have a testing policy, which can and has led to breaches in test security.

The ESC agreed with the need for testing and remediation protocols. The proposed policy requires providers of core training to have a testing policy that addresses the aforementioned issues.

It is the recommendation of the ESC to adopt a new policy requiring core providers to develop a test administration policy. This policy will be implemented on July 1, 2013, with a one year grace period for current core providers to ensure proper implementation of the policy with technical assistance from STC staff.

2. Lesson Plans for Training Courses Policy

This issue was submitted by STC staff.

Best practice in the development and delivery of training includes the creation of a lesson plan. Lesson plans provide insight about the delivery of instructional objectives, teaching methodology, and activities and improves the quality of training. Currently, lesson plans are not required as part of the STC course certification process.

The ESC agreed that in order to improve the quality of training, it is important that lesson plans are required. The proposed policy does not require a standardized format, as each lesson plan needs to work for each course provided and instead requires lesson plans to contain required components as listed in the policy. Additionally, the policy states that the lesson plans are not required to be submitted to STC as part of the certification process, but must be made available upon request or during course monitoring.

It is the recommendation of the ESC to adopt a new policy that requires training providers to have a lesson plan for courses that are STC certified beginning July 1, 2013. The time it may take to create lesson plans for all classes was recognized and the ESC recommends a one-year grace period for currently certified courses.

3. Course Budget and Tuition Policy

This issue was submitted by STC staff and through the STC field survey.

The course certification process includes prescriptive budget policies that were designed to ensure training is cost effective. In practice, this process is complex, results in billing errors, and the inability to certify courses that exceed minimum allowances despite a demonstrated need. The current budget policy has not had a comprehensive review since the STC Program's inception in 1980.

The current budget policy defines maximum thresholds for up to nine different areas of expense, not including travel and per diem, in approved budget categories, which, when combined, define the total course cost. If the provider is able to achieve the maximum thresholds in each category, the maximum tuition possible is \$120 per person per eight-hour day. In reality, due to the "actual cost" clause, the maximum charged per person per eight-hour day is much less. That cost is later adjusted according to *actual* expenses and enrollment levels after the course delivery.

The proposed policy allows providers to charge up to \$100 per person per eight-hour day with out defining a budget. Providers can submit a detailed justification if their training needs to exceed the \$100 threshold and submit it along with a signed agreement with the agency administrator. The proposed policy simplifies the budget process, provides greater

flexibility to agencies in procuring necessary training, and removes the four-hour restriction on the length of the course.

It is the recommendation of the ESC to accept the revised budget policy for implementation beginning July 1, 2013.

4. STC Work-Related Education (WRE) Credits Policy

This issue was submitted through the STC survey; two comments were received.

The WRE is the least stringent level of four types of STC certification. It is typically used when STC participants are not the main intended audience. Current policy allows managers and administrators to meet 100% of their annual training requirement through the Work-Related Education, Training and Professional Development (WRE) format. Supervisors and line staff are allowed to meet half of their training requirement through the WRE format. The two comments received regarding this policy requested permitting all levels to receive 100% of the hourly credit via WRE. One requested that supervisors be allowed to meet 100% of their credit through the WRE format, and one requested that both supervisors and line staff be allowed to meet the requirement in this manner.

The ESC members agreed that it would be detrimental to lower the standard. The supervisor level is the “backbone” of an organization and the job has become more complex over time. Allowing a “looser” format of training is not the answer, as it “lowers the bar” and allows for attendance in “less quality” training for this classification.

It is the recommendation of the ESC that the current policy remain.

The remainder of the STC issues will be discussed by the regulation workgroup which is chaired by Alameda County Sheriff Greg Ahern on May 29, 2013. The recommendations of the workgroup will be reviewed and revised or approved by the ESC and forwarded to the Board for consideration at the July meeting.

Recommendation/Action Needed:

1. Accept the recommendations of the STC ESC